

But Crabbe, with the strain of romance in his nature, is also in time a generation nearer than Johnson to the Romantic Revival. He is less afraid of letting his imagination go. Like a plebeian cousin of Landor, he too, stands at the meeting of two centuries, between reason and dream. Johnson would never have written *Sir Eustace Grey*, that opium-stimulated nightmare which, however inferior to *Kubla Khan*, is a strange work for this solid Anglican; even though in deference to good sense he puts it in the mouth of a haunted lunatic:²

They forced me on, where ever dwell
Far-distant men in cities fair,
Cities of whom no travellers tell,
Nor feet but mine were wanderers
there.
Their watchmen stare, and stand aghast,
As on we hurry through the dark;
The watch-light blinks as we go past,
The watch-dog shrinks and fears to
bark.

But even when Crabbe rides away over the hills of romance, his grim realism rides behind him. He takes the -road, not towards Xanadu, but towards Wuthering Heights. He never travels so far; but tales like *Smugglers and Poachers* or *Peter Grimes*, with its description of the spectres that haunt the fisherman who has murdered his apprentices, show both sides of Crabbe. If his romanticism calls up the accusing phantoms, it is his minutest realism that paints the setting—the slimy channels in the salt-marsh, the blighted tree, the melancholy stakes with their sun-blistered tar, the tepid, muddy waters, Where the small eels that left the deeper way For the warm shore, within the shallows play;

Where gaping muscles, left upon the mud,
Slope their slow passage to the Men flood.

²Scott applied a quotation from it to himself when
his mind was
beginning to fail.